

REFLECTIONS WHILE WATCHING JOHN FANTE'S "WAIT UNTIL
SPRING, BANDINI."

some men identify with their fathers
and see things from
a predominantly male point of view.

some men identify with their mothers
and see things from
a predominantly female point of view.

i am not referring to sexual orientation.
i am not referring to the hatred of either sex.

maybe some few are able to identify equally
with their fathers and their mothers
and to view things, like god,
from more than one point of view.

maybe not.

THE WITNESSES MEET MY TEENAGE DAUGHTER

as the interminable bells summon me to
semi-consciousness, i realize my daughter
has already answered the door:

"good morning," they are already chorusing,
"is this a christian household?"

"nope," my daughter says, "we're a bunch of atheists."

wonderful, i silently exult, making a mental
note to reward her with a new compact disc,
and i figure, now they'll know better than
to pick on a minor — they'll leave their
"literature" and go away and i can roll
back over for another couple of hours.

but instead i hear them asking her ingratiatingly,
"then you probably don't believe in the biblical
account of god's creation of the universe?"

"nope again," she says, "all of us in this house
believe in evolution, even my little brother."

"oh, and where is he?"

"he's on his way to his karate class
in my mother's car."

"well then, maybe you would like to hear
the true story of the creation"

"that's enough!" i bellow,
through resounding tunnels of phlegm,
as i struggle to free myself of the bedclothes.

"what was that?!" i hear the witnesses
inquire in a quaver.

"i said, that's enough!" i roar,
rolling to my feet.

"that?" my beloved daughter replies,
"oh that was just my father. he's the
BIGGEST atheist of us all."

then i hear the door slam and
her footsteps on the hardwood floors:

"it's okay," she reassures me; "they seem
to be skipping the rest of the homes on this block."

and i know that she is going to be
much more than okay also.

NEVER MAKE UNREASONABLE DEMANDS

trying to shock them,
the expert on felonious mutilations
asks, rhetorically,

"have you ever wondered what the inside of
your peeled-back scalp would look like?"

toad can only reply,

"no, my dermatologist has always
more than had his hands full
just trying to keep my epidermis
presentable."

LEAVING YOURSELF BEHIND

toad's only motivation
for earning a million bucks
would be to bequeath to his university
a generously endowed

Chair of Misogyny.